

A

S E R M O N,

P R E A C H E D

9.

ON SUNDAY, JUNE 8th, 1794,

ON BOARD HIS

MAJESTY'S SHIP

Brunswick,

CAPT. JOHN HARVEY.

BY THE

REVEREND W. GRIFFITH, A. B. CHAPLAIN.

P O R T S E A :

PRINTED FOR T. WHITEWOOD.

MDCCXCIV.



S E R M O N,

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PSALM cvii, VERSE 22.

*Let us offer unto Him the Sacrifice of Thanksgiving:
and tell out his Works with Gladness.*

IN this Psalm David declares the many signal blessings the Almighty had shewn the people of Israel; and, lest they would be forgetful to acknowledge his watchful protection over them, he frequently exclaims, in these animating words, “O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!”

Indeed, my brethren, wherever we turn our
A 2 eyes,

eyes, the whole course of Providence presents to us a sufficient reason to glorify God. For who protected us in the helpless state of infancy? Who gives us food and raiment? Who marks, with a paternal eye, all our steps? The Almighty; and blessed be his holy name.

But since we have met here on this solemn occasion, to praise God for a particular deliverance vouchsafed to us, I shall, in the first place, consider the great importance of offering the Sacrifice of Thanksgiving, and tell out the Works of God with Gladness; and second, what is meant in this duty of thankfulness.

The great importance of thanksgiving on this occasion will appear very evident from considering the enemies we had to engage with. It is universally allowed that there is nothing so conducive to humanize the nature of man, as the knowledge of the existence of a God. This confession mollifies his manners, teaches him to shew that mercy to others which he himself expects. On the contrary, where a denial of God, and of his government prevails, there the manners of the people are most savage. Now, these were men of this description



description, they were regardless of God, denying him in all their counsels. No less regardless of laws divine, and human, that they forgot the very *semblance* of humanity.

Not believing in a Supreme Being, and consequently denying a future existence, they steeled their hearts with a determined resolution of universal carnage; butchering alike, the husband and wife; the father and son; the hoary headed sage and helpless infant. They foolishly concluded that their diabolical actions were no where noticed, that with the Almighty there was neither knowledge, power, or vengeance. Actuated by these thoughts they left no art untried, no stratagem unattempted, to cut us off from the land of the living. The fatal balls whized in every direction; they surrounded us on every side. They were fully determined that the "Waters should drown us, and the "Stream should go over our Souls." Full three hours the battle raged, till at last our Lord *appeared for us*: He covered our heads, and made us stand in the day of battle. "The Lord over-threw our enemies, and dashed in pieces those "that rose up against us."

You

You see what great things the Almighty hath done for us. Without his aid none of us would have been able now to celebrate his name, but must have paid either an eternal adieu to all terrestrial things, or be taken to a country where nothing but *confusion* reigns. Ought we not then, humbly to kneel on our knees, and fervently thank our God for his mighty deliverance, and with one voice say, “ Blessed be the Lord; exalted be the “ God of the Rock of our Salvation.”

That you may perform this very necessary work by means most conducive to your own eternal welfare, I shall beg leave to recommend to your most serious consideration a few plain and easy precepts.

That your thankfulness, then, may be sincere, and suitable to the solemnity of this day; you must, in the first place, be convinced that *God* is the origin and disposer of all events. That every thing proceeds from his express will, or permission. That the fortuituous occurrence of *chance* in vain claims any merit; but that all things are really *his* works. As HE formed this earth, in which we are only sojourners or pilgrims: As HE
breathed

breathed into our nostrils the breath of life: And since every thing in this wonderful creation are the works of his hands, such an Omnipotent and all-wise Being must therefore rule all things; must be the grand spring of all events. Be assured, then, that however *brave* you have shewed yourselves in this severe conflict; however collected and steady—it must be attributed to the gracious interposition of the Almighty.

It was HE that inspired you with unshaken courage—It was HE that levelled the fatal engines of death—It was HE, that through the thick and smoky air, directed every ball. Not to *yourselves* then give the glory of the day; or say it was your own strength that caused you to triumph, but an invincible Being, the very breath of whose nostrils can utterly destroy.

In the next place your thankfulness must be *lasting*.

It is not sufficient that you *meet here* to celebrate his merciful protection, but it must be as permanent as life; for you must not conclude that you came together to declare the works of God
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the *present time only*, but to *eternity*. To rouse each other at all times, and in all places, to a continual remembrance of his mercy. *True gratitude* for *ever* dwells in the mind, shewing itself on every proper occasion. The benefit received is deeply engraved on the memory—A love for the benefactor prevails over every other pleasure—The lips are for ever ready to utter his praise.

That thankfulness is not genuine which is momentary; that *alone is true gratitude* that dwells in the Soul. A man may for a time be thankful for a particular benefit granted him; but as soon as the scene is changed by some other avocations, the impression is lost, and the mercy no more thought of. Think not that this sacrifice will please the Almighty. So far from being acceptable to him, that he will take it in no other light than the mere service of the lips: he will look upon it as an *hypocritical* shew of acknowledgment, and not the real effusion of a sincere heart. Let your gratitude resemble not the dew of the morning, which soon disappears at the rising sun; but let it be like the great luminary itself, for *ever* enlightening your souls, and dispersing the pernicious fog of forgetfulness. The Jews, when they received any mark
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of the divine benignity, were for a time truly sensible of the kindness ; but, unhappily, the impression was soon effaced. For this reason the Almighty pronounced them to be an *insensible, obdurate, and unthankful* people. Let not this be your case, for ingratitude towards God is a sin of the blackest hue.

In the next place the text recommends, “ To tell out his Works with *Gladness.*”

Now, by Gladness, must not be understood, a noisy excessive mirth, having recourse to the intoxicating bowl, or any high flow of spirit which is apt to carry us beyond the limits of reason. But it is a *sober, chaste, and temperate* joy. It is that calmness of mind that spreads a continual sun-shine of happiness to every thing around. It is that inward pleasure that never cloy, that never vents itself upon an improper occasion ; but by every virtuous ardour expresses her joy, and blessed ~~be~~ the original cause of her exultation. But this heavenly comfort is better felt than expressed. Let your hearts be once tempered to acknowledge a mercy received, you will feel your souls begin to glow with a pleasure surpassing all expression.

The *vital spark* will, in a manner, mount on ceraphic wings; and, mixing with Angels in the grand chorus of Halleluah's, will sing praises to God with endless acclamations.

When, therefore, you review the actions of this day, and relate the wonderful Providence of God; and how you heard the balls whize around, and your friend or messmate lying dead at your feet, let your hearts burst with a religious joy at the recital, and glorify the invisible hand that protected you.

As to our unfortunate brethren, who fell in this desperate engagement, let us compose our minds to a ready compliance with the will of divine Providence, to a pious and becoming resignation. They died in the cause of God and his Holy Religion. They died in the cause of their King and Country. And as there is reason to conclude that these worthy friends have made a happy change, it is foolish, and shews a distrust in God to indulge excessive sorrow on their account. Let us consider that *shortly* we shall follow them, that our stay behind them will not be long, that the period is near when there will be no fear of any farther

ther separation. *They* are gone, we trust, to a *happy* state, to a mansion void of all *anxiety*. “ On
 “ *Earth* dwell pain and danger, vanity and vexation
 “ of spirit; but there all troubles shall fly away,
 “ all tears shall be wiped from our eyes, and joy
 “ spring up eternal in the soul.” *Here* we have
 to toil and watch, and to fight against an host of
 enemies; but *there* victory attends us; and *there*
 all our labours will cease. *Here* we are in a fo-
 reign country; *there* we shall procure our proper
 home, and all our happiness; and thither our
 Saviour, and all our best friends are gone before us.
 Banish then all melancholy thoughts, and say
 with Job, “ the Lord gave, and the Lord hath
 “ taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.”

For our brethren and friends, now lying in their
 beds of affliction, let us address the Almighty with
 such words as these: “ Almighty Father who art
 “ a present help in time of trouble, we most ear-
 “ nestly beseech thee, if it be thy blessed will to
 “ ease the pains, and comfort our afflicted brothers.
 “ Grant them patience to endure thy corrections,
 “ that with a meek and quiet submission to thy will,
 “ they may wait till thou seest fit to deliver them
 from

“ from their distress. And whatever pains they
 “ may feel in their bodies, may they still love Thee.
 “ To which purpose, O Lord, be pleased, in thy
 “ great mercy, to strengthen and support them;
 “ sanctify this affliction to them, that it may pro-
 “ duce the fruits of a true and lively faith, and sin-
 “ cere repentance of all their sins; all which we
 “ beg, through the merits of Jesus Christ our
 “ Saviour.”

To conclude, let the great deliverance you have
 this day commemorated be unto *you* an endless song
 of praise. *Your* station in life *absolutely* demands
 it. For *wars* will exist till time is no more. Your
 King and country will again solicit your *glorious*
 exertions. Retain, therefore, in your minds the
 happy victory you have obtained through God's
 assistance. Write it in golden characters on the
 tablets of your hearts.

Then whenever any nation will dare to disturb
 the peace of our happy island, you may gladly
 enlist under the banners of our gracious sovereign,
 and in full assurance of the Almighty Protection,
 prove a dread and terror to them.

But

But *chiefly*, remember to add to this a *Godly* and *Religious Life*. Let your lives be adorned with the Christian virtues. Banish from your minds all wicked thoughts. Let your conversation be as becometh the Gospel of Christ. Remove far from you that *horrid* custom of common *swearing*. This is a sin that does disgrace to the British Navy. You are deservedly branded of being more addicted to this *abominable* habit than any set of men. Resolve then to overcome this shameful opprobrium on your characters. Consider, that for every *idle word* you must one day give an *account*, much more for calling upon the sacred name of God upon every trifling occasion.

In all your ways acknowledge God, and he will direct your paths. He will guide you with his counsel, and after that receive you to glory, and then you will be *more than conquerors*; you shall obtain a Crown of Glory, through the merits of Christ in his everlasting kingdom.

And may God grant this to each of us through Christ our Lord, to whom be glory and dominion both now and for ever.

AMEN.

